The Builder.

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BRIDGEWATER HOUSE, a new residence for the Earl of Ellesmere, was long talked of, but through a variety of circumstances was not commenced till the month of July, in 1847. The carcase is now completed; the chimneys are being capped, the carving cleaned off: and we to-day lay before our readers an engraving of the west front,* and proceed to give them some particulars of the structure, premising, for the sake of our country friends, that it stands on the east side of the Green-park, adjoining the well-known Spencer-house, and that its south, or entrance front, is in Cleveland-row, so called from "that beautiful fury," Barbara, duchess of Cleveland, to whom the worthless Charles II. presented Berkshire-house, which formerly stood there.

The situation is one of the finest in the metropolis,—the view from the state rooms of the new house, over the park and towards Buckingham-palace, is perfectly beautiful, and, in point of locality, the house is not to be matched, including amongst its neighbours, together with the buildings already named, Stafford-house, the residence of the tasteful and excellent Duchess of Sutherland, St. James's Palace, and Marlborough-house.

The plan of the Bridgewater House approaches a square; the south front is 142 feet 6 inches, from east to west; and the west front, shewn by our engraving, 122 feet from north to south; and there are two small courts within the mass to aid in lighting the various apartments. It was originally proposed to erect a square tower at the north-east angle of the building, but this is abandoned, at least for the present, and probably without detriment to the effect of the building, excepting as seen from Piccadilly. The palace-residences of Rome and Venice furnish the general types for the elevations, skilfully combined in good proportions: the details are mostly very elegant, and the general effect good.

The projection of the wings, it will be observed, is very slight: the reticulated rustication of the coins is wide, and, being most carefully drawn, gives considerable richness without coarseness. It is by the careful outlining of every moulding, and the repeated study of every ornament, no matter where it is to be placed, that Mr. Barry succeeds in giving to all his buildings that degree of finish and completeness which distinguishes them. And we would here advise our younger readers to take a leaf out of the same good book. Don't be too soon satisfied, either with your first design for the whole, or your after drawings for the parts. Try again; weigh and compare; don't be afraid of time or trouble: blunders or bad taste in stone remain long to reproach and annoy. And, further, remember always what Michelangelo said to an acquaintance, who, finding him, some weeks after a statue had been apparently finished, still touching upon it, reproached him for wasting his time on trifles. This, or something like it, is what he said,—"My good friend, these trifles of which you speak, are the little matters which make all the difference between excellence and *perfection*; and perfection, surely, is *no trifle*."

The chimneys are brought to the angles, and made to form architectural features. The main cornice is very rich. The dolphins' heads in the corona are scarcely what they should be: they are too skull-like. The string-course under the two-pair windows, a folded ribbon, is very elegant. The dressings of the windows of principal floor include rich swags of flowers: the shield in each window-head displays two E's entwined *dos-a-dos*; and in the panel beneath is the suggestive but not very luminous motto of the Duke of Bridgewater, *Sic donec*.

The south elevation differs from the west in having no projections of the front wall, the rusticated coins at the extreme angles only, and a series of nine windows, exactly like those in the centre part of the west front. Vases surmount the dies of the balustrade. The entrance-porch, not yet built, will be in the centre, and be surmounted at the angles by similar vases. The whole of these fronts, and part of each of the other fronts, are faced with Portland stone.

In examining the interior of the building, when finished, one point will particularly force itself on the attention, and that is the care which has been taken so to plan it, that the freedom of access to his fine gallery of pictures, which Lord Ellesmere proposes to grant the public, may not be interfered with by the private requirements of the liberal owner. The ground-floor, 20 feet 6 inches high, contains within itself a perfect residence—drawing-room, dining-room, library, ladies' rooms, chamber and dressing-rooms, &c. The first floor, with the exception of part of the east front, is wholly appropriated to state rooms,—dining-room, drawing-rooms, and a picture gallery which will scarcely have an equal in the metropolis. Visiters will pass through the hall from the south entrance, and up the grand staircase (we hope this will be light enough, by the way) to this gallery, which is quite on the opposite side of the building, without in any way interfering or trespassing on the residence of the family.

The gallery occupies the whole of the north side of the house, and is carried out a few feet beyond the east wall of the ground floor, additional length being wanted, and the ground below being confined for the stable purposes. This extension is carried on stone landings and iron cantilevers, which come through at least 20 feet, and are there securely tied down.

The height of the gallery is 32 feet, and the width is the same. The roof is formed with iron principals, elliptical outside, with a horizontal tie about midway to form a flat ceiling inside, with coved sides, from which the gallery is lighted. The walls will be perfectly flat from the level of the dado up to the cornice, and in order that no hanging chandeliers may obstruct the view in any part, an arrangement will be made to illuminate the gallery at night, which is somewhat peculiar. A burner (probably gas) will be fixed *outside* each light in the cove with a strong reflector, by which means, further, the heated atmosphere consequent on the number of lamps required to shew the paintings properly will be avoided. A telescope tube will admit of the standards being put out of sight from within the gallery during the day, and avoid the obstruction of sun-light, and a gallery is formed externally to give easy access to them.

On the east side of the building previously referred to a mezzanine is introduced, which is appropriated wholly to the ladies' maids, and over this story are the washhouse and laundry. The accommodation and separation of the different classes of servants is a matter of some difficulty in a large establishment.

We will only further mention at present that air shafts and ventilating flues appear to be provided in abundance; that there is no timber bond or plates used; that the ground-floor is wholly arched with brickwork (4 inches in cement), and that the corridors both on the ground and first-floor, which promise to be successful in effect, are also vaulted with brickwork, instead of having the vaultings formed unreally, as is usually the case, with lath and plaster.

The Messrs. Baker are the builders employed, and we may mention that the work is being done, not by contract, but for agreed prices by measure.

The coachhouses will be on the east side of the residence, and the stables will be *above* them; the mode of access for the horses being an inclined plane.

The ground next the park front will be laid out as a garden in geometrical beds, with a terrace next the house paved ornamentally: and we have now probably said enough to shew that Bridgewater House promises to be both a commodious and noble residence, and a fitting receptacle for that important collection of works of art, in which, thanks to the liberality of its owner, the country at large will have an interest.

* See p. 451, in present number.

ON THE INFLUENCES WHICH TEND TO RETARD THE PROGRESS OF THE FINE ARTS.*

WHEN we reflect how many thousands of pounds have been spent within these last few months on old paintings, and the length of time it takes under the ordinary patronage of modern art to disburse an equal amount, we cannot but deprecate to the utmost extent in our power this most unpatriotic procedure, especially when it is known how much is disbursed on the veriest rubbish, which cannot boast originality even in their canvass. It is, we consider, as culpable as that one should fill his conservatories with choice exotics, leaving all without that is indigenous to his native soil to waste and ruin. Is it at all probable that English art would have been in a more flourishing condition had the thousands or the hundreds of thousands that have been spent upon old masters been devoted to the encouragement of young scholars to become new ones?

To collect the curiosities and remains of the art of former times in museums or galleries may be well enough, but to surround oneself in daily life with such objects is nothing less than to abide in the tomb of the past. For our own parts we would prefer dwelling among those images which should laugh as they kept time to the jocund yet earnest steps of progress. Fashion, however, makes a sedate countenance,—for who dares to laugh at the tyrant?

Let us, then, since we have intrenched ourselves against antiquity, endeavour to remove this barrier against progress—for such we consider this propensity—to which the archæological taste, which has made so many converts of late years, is very nearly allied. This certainly may be serviceable to history, and afford lessons that we may profit by, but we believe it to be oftener detrimental to progress. It may be observed that the earth in past times was pervaded with a life differing in its features from the present, and when its circumstances changed, vitality also assumed new forms of being: think you that the petrifaction from which our inferences are drawn would be adapted to the new conditions of existence? So in the old world of human affairs the stratum of circumstances, and the ideas which

* See p. 431, *ante*.

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